The Hackers Conference News

June 1988

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Glenn S. Tenney, Chairperson

This year's Hackers Conference is coming up soon. It will be held at the same site in Saratoga, California.

Hackers 4.0, 7-9 October 1988

We're trying something a bit different this year. Instead of the usual letters, we're going to try a newsletter style. We'll have two or three newsletters (if we find the time, the news, and the money) for the four or five months before the conference and another a month after the conference. Instead of telling you the news that you've seen on the nets, or in the big-time rags, this will focus on the plans and people of the Hackers Conference. Drop us a note, or a phone call, and let us know what's new and exciting in your life.

This year's conference theme is: **Connections**. Connections between hardware to software; the past to the future; human to machine; technology hacking to the real world; computers to other media; and of course, telecommunications. The agenda is being developed over the next month or two. Tom Mandel is again in charge of the agenda, and hopes to receive a lot of input from you. Of course, the agenda is flexible, tailored to the desires of the attendees at the conference.

As in previous years, we need your financial assistance which allows us to: have 24 hour a day munchies; have special midnight buffets; provide the many needed scholarships; and, in general, pay the bills. Thanks to special donations last year by Steve Wozniak and Autodesk, we were able to have Fabrice Florin (who produced the original *Hackers* documentary for PBS) videotape segments of the conference.

This year is no different. We are still asking for many donations. We'd like to: be able to provide travel assistance for a few East Coast starving hackers; transcribe the plenary sessions to an online service (maybe even be able to get some interaction from non-attendees?); and other special events. For example, we have reserved the entire San Francisco Exploratorium (you did see *The Ring of Truth* on PBS?) for a "Hackers and Friends" evening the night before our conference, **6 October 1988**. All we need are a few large donations...

In addition to financial assistance, which we desperately need, we also need to upgrade the memory of the Mac SE that we're using (Hey, buddy, can you spare a 1M SIMM?). We could also use: an SE accelerator, a full page display, a backup device, another SCSI drive, an upgrade for a MAC 512K, and on and on and...

The Hackers Conference is still sponsored by The Point Foundation which is a 501C(3) corporation. Charity aside, you or your company should view this as a worthwhile PR expenditure.

So far, this year's donors include: **Apple Computer** (Mac SE and LaserWriter), **Priam** (MacDisk), **Ashton-Tate** (FullWrite Professional), **ACIUS** (4th Dimension), **BIX** (BYTE Information Exchange), and an anonymous donor. We expect to have many more donors of merchandise and money by the next newsletter. Why not add your or your company's name to the list of Hackers Conference donors.

Every year a few people say "I'm not a Hacker." We don't use the term "hacker" in the same way as does the media. We believe that hacking is more a personality and has no sinister overtones. After Hackers 2.0, Bob Bickford defined a hacker as: **"Any person who derives joy from discovering ways to circumvent limitations."** The term "hacker" is usually associated with computers, but all professions have people that are hackers.

If you know somebody who should be invited, send us some information about the person. Please be sure to include a current and complete mailing address. The invitations committee will consider your request, for this year if time and space permits. We try to vary the mix of people at each conference.

This year's organizing committee includes: Bob Bickford, David Boulton, Steve Cisler, Mary Eisenhart, Erik Fair, David Gans, Brett Glass, Tom Mandel, Glenn Tenney, and Susan Tenney. Without the help of these and many other volunteers, this conference would not be taking place.

Your registration form will be mailed in a few weeks. Space will be limited, and registrations will be processed in the order received.

Be seeing you.

Glenn S. Tenney, Chairperson

Sponsored by The Point Foundation, 27 Gate Five Road, Sausalito, CA, 94965

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The original Hackers Conference was held in 1984 in Marin County, California. It was organized by the people at Whole Earth and The Point Foundation, and was catalyzed by the publication of Steven Levy's book *HACKERS: The Heroes of the Computer Revolution*. The Whole Earth people figured that it would be really great to get some of the people mentioned in that book together for a weekend and "see what happened". It was a resounding success. The attendees had a great time, and a video documentary resulted which aired nationwide on PBS.

In the early summer of 1986, several of us were participating in a conference on the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link) when the subject of the Hackers Conference came up and it was mentioned "Why not do it again?" These were, as they say, the fateful words. Not quite six months later, we had managed to put together Hackers 2.0, which was held in Santa Clara County, CA. It, too, was a resounding success. An informal poll on the last day showed overwhelming support for an annual Hackers Conference. Some people, though, attend every other year.

This weekend is meant to be one long, high-powered, energetic exchange of ideas as a catalyst for the future. The free flow of information is encouraged. Partly for that reason, the very few press attendees are told that everything said or overheard outside of the plenary sessions is strictly off the record unless otherwise specifically arranged. Sunday, however, is open to the press specifically for publication purposes.

The Hackers Conferences are strictly invitation-only. Unhappily, there are limits to the number of people we can accommodate. How do we know whom to invite? We're inviting you because we think that you'll bring something to the conference: some idea, contribution, energy, or whatever it is that makes things work. We think you're a Hacker: someone who enjoys pushing the envelope, bypassing limits, discovering knowledge, inventing solutions, adventuring into uncharted areas.

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